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1. About DEC

Development Expertise Center (DEC):

Is an Ethiopian Residents Charity founded in 2007 with the initiative of Edukans Foundation (EF) of the Netherlands with the objective of contributing towards the national development efforts through integrated, decentralized and sustainable program interventions. Today DEC is governed by a general assembly and a governing board with five members as its supreme governing organ. It has a secretariat headed by an Executive Director who is assigned by the board and responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organization with a management team of departments/section heads. DEC has 110 staff members (64 Female & 46 Male) working at the coordination office in Addis Ababa and five branch offices located within three National Regional States and one City Administration (Amhara, Afar, Oromiya and Addis Ababa). Together with strategic partners DEC has built excellence in the provision of quality services for disadvantaged community members in the country. It has developed and makes use of appropriate & relevant policy, procedure and guidelines to guide its management and operations. Realizing the global challenges of continued access to funding opportunities and towards ensuring institutional sustainability DEC has embarked on considering alternative local fund raising mechanisms with the establishment of an income generating office.

2. Introduction

This strategic plan document is a result of series of discussions and consultation from the grassroots to the highest levels. The Plan comes at a critical moment in terms of the history and future of DEC response, when the imperative for action has never been stronger. The emergence of new national and global com-

mitments has helped to advance DEC agenda in the past five years. With the development of the second Growth & Transformation Plan (GTP- II) and agreement by UN Member States on an ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes DEC, it is time to build on the momentum and the technical foundations in place. We have the knowledge, evidence-based solutions, and partnerships necessary to drive a historic transformation that will improve the lives of generations to come. The next five years provide an important opportunity to scale up action on DEC programs. Seizing the moment it can empower people socially and economically to live **Gender** and dignified lives, and at the same time reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth and environmental sustainability. In this next phase, our success will be dependent on understanding and responding to the complexities of a vastly changed context: the shifting geography of poverty, growing inequality, changing political dynamics, escalating humanitarian emergencies, climate change and economic development.

3. A Strategic Agenda to Drive Change

3.1. Our Vision

DEC aspires to see all under privileged children properly fostered.

3.2. Our Mission

DEC facilitates child centered comprehensive development interventions to create safe and conducive environment to fulfill the best interest of under privileged children.

3.3. Our Core Values

The core values that inspire DEC and guide its operations are:

3.3.1. Excellence & Innovation

DEC constantly challenges itself to the highest levels of learning and performance to achieve greater impact. It aspires to be the best in quality and in everything it does. Innovation: DEC attaches great importance to innovative ideas and practices. It pursues continuous improvements, listening to and understanding the needs of its target groups, being informed and seeking out new ideas, and looking for ways to improve operational performance.

3.3. 2. Accountability & Transparency

DEC acknowledges and assumes responsibility for all its actions, services, decisions and policies. It believes that it is accountable to target beneficiaries, partner CSOs, government, donor organizations, and all stakeholders. To realize this it consults its stakeholders and receives feedback consistently from all. Transparency: DEC has a strong faith in maintaining transparency in its operation and utilization of resources. It will continue to be open in its relationship with all its stakeholders.

3.3. 3. Responsiveness

DEC acts with a sense of urgency and makes qualified decisions in time. It pays timely and appropriate attention to details with an understanding and respect for others.

3.3. 4. Professionalism

DEC encourages and demands high degree of expertise and knowledge in all its engagements. It also promotes performance of acceptable quality of work/services. Learning from what is working well and not working, build upon strengths and challenges for high performance are valued.

3.3. 5. Ease of Communication/Collaboration

DEC attaches high value to open communication through encouraging free exchange of opinions and views. It acknowledges change happens through the connections, creativity, contributions and collaboration of internal & external stakeholders.

3.4. Our Core Programs:

DEC has adopted three core program components to be implemented in the coming five years.

1. Child Development
2. Skills & Entrepreneurship Development
3. **Gender & Life Skills Development**

4. Goals, Objectives & Strategies

4.1 Institutional Goals & Strategies

DEC recognizes very well the importance of developing organization and program goals and strategies. However, it also does not underestimate the need to enhance its own capacity and strengthen itself in several organizational dimensions. It has therefore developed institutional development goals and strategies to achieve the following objectives:

- To introduce a well developed organizational systems & procedures defining clear roles, responsibilities and functional relationships of offices and staff of the organization.
- To communicate and share the vision, mission, guiding values and program interventions for DEC's internal and external stakeholders and enable them actively cooperate and participate in the implementation process.

- To create a working environment that retains and attracts competent and quality human resource to promote organizational efficiency & effectiveness.
- To strengthen the income generating capacity of DEC to generate adequate resources that could ensure organizational sustainability. Accordingly the following four institutional goals are planned to be achieved through employing appropriate strategies.

Goal 1:- To Make DEC Institutionally Strong, Vibrant & Sustainable CSO

Strategies:

- Introduce (as required) & apply work procedures, guidelines and performance review systems, which promote and enable an empowering work environment.
- Periodically undertake organizational and management development programs for continuously enhancing strategic leadership capacity at all levels.
- Set and operate clear communication and workflow lines in all directions (head office-region, region to region, project to project, sector to sector etc.) with a strong and functioning feedback system.
- Establish performance and service standards with time-frame and quality of service levels accompanied by indicators for measurement.
- Popularize the vision mission, program interventions of DEC in a clearly articulated way and ensure that its beneficiaries, donors, supporters,
- collaborating agencies, regulatory bodies, implementing partners and the public at large know and sufficiently un-

derstand DEC's role and contribution to child, youth & community development.

- Conduct periodic self-capacity assessment initiative to identify DEC's organizational gaps and development requirements in order to continuously improve organizational capability to effectively promote the cause of disadvantaged children and contribute towards their well being

Goal 2:- To enhance DEC's human resources capacity & motivation levels for good performance & achievement of best results

Strategies

- Prepare and implement a systematic and need based human resources development plan to continuously build the human capacity of DEC.
- Improve merit-based career development opportunities to increase staff motivation and performance levels.
- Practice competitive salary and remuneration system (with a view to DEC's resources capacity) that could attract and retain experienced staff.
- Strengthen the governance and management of DEC by building the capacity of leaders and professional staff through exposure visits, providing opportunities for training and experiences sharing.

Goal 3:- To Gradually move DEC Towards Self-supporting CSO/ NGO

Strategies

- Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan including re-

sources base sustainability) for DEC.

- Strengthen the management system of the income generating wing based on the initial year challenges and experiences.
- Undertake a comprehensive and participatory assessment to identify profitable and sustainable income generating activities.
- Review and assess on exploring possibilities for generating local resources
- Build staff resources mobilization (e.g. training staff on local resources mobilization) skills and experiences.

Goal 4:- To Strengthen and Effectively Operate an Efficient Monitoring, Evaluation & Knowledge Management System that Could Contribute to Increased Performance Accountability & Transparency

Strategies: Review & ensure the implementation of the Monitoring & Evaluation manual Develop (as required) simple and practical local/project-based participatory monitoring and evaluation formats that complement the manual.

Strategies:

- Enhance the availability of efficient & quality knowledge management system through computerizing the data base system at head office level (to collect, analyze and disseminate data and information).
- Review & ensure the implementation of the Monitoring & Evaluation manual Develop (as required) simple and practical local/project-based participatory monitoring and evaluation formats that complement the manual.
- Enhance the circulation of magazines, newsletters, bro-

chures, reports, learning and best practices as well as strengthening communication facilities for information sharing and dissemination.

- Establish a regular information-exchanging network and feedback system with Head Office, project offices, partners and beneficiaries and ensuring that there is a constant information updating.
- Enhance the circulation of magazines, newsletters, brochures, reports, learning and best practices as well as strengthening communication facilities for information sharing and dissemination.

4.2. Program Goals & Strategies

In the coming five years, DEC continues with its aspiration of becoming a strong and dynamic civil society organization that effectively and tangibly contributes to the growth, development and well being of its target communities with their active participation. The realization of DEC's vision requires the identification, design and implementation of relevant program interventions that are consistent with its organizational mission. In the coming five years, FSCE aspires to become a strong and dynamic NGO that effectively and tangibly contributes to the growth, development and well being of its target communities with their active participation. The realization of FSCE's vision requires the identification, design and implementation of relevant program interventions that are consistent with its organizational mission.

Overall Program Goal:

To design & implement sustainable development programs to

address the social and economic problems of target groups. Objective:

- To strengthen program management (design; planning; implementation; reporting, monitoring, evaluation & learning) systems.
- To improve program management efficiency & effectiveness through well designed & economical location of area & project offices.
- To address the socio economic challenges of marginalized/underserved target groups.
- To build the capacity of target institutions at grassroots level. Program Strategies:
- Develop a program management policy and procedure guideline.
- Define program intervention (area, program & target group phase in and phase out) strategy.

Define area/project office establishment and location criteria/strategy.

4.3. Core Programs Components Goals & Strategies

1. Core Program - 1: Child Development

The sub components of the Child Development Program are:

- Early Childhood Care & Development
- Promotion of Quality Education
- Promotion of Access to Education
- Promotion of Child Safeguarding
- Promotion of Education Emergency

The specific objectives of the Child Development Program

are:

- To improve safe guarding of children from different kinds of abuse, neglect, and address the problems related with child development.
- To enhance the role of parents or guardians in the improvement of care and development of children in their early ages.
- To enhance the development of the child through improving the nutrition, hygiene & sanitation, education and **Gender** status.
- To improve the academic performance of low achiever students to enhance creativity and talent.
- To improve access to quality education for marginalized and disadvantaged children.
- To enhance girls' equal participation and competence beyond secondary school.
- To improve the hygiene & sanitation, and **Gender** status of target school children.
- To enhance the five pillars of star school model (parents & community involvement, learning environment, learning & teaching, innovation & integration, education leadership & management). To achieve these objectives the following two goals and appropriate strategies are developed.

Goal 1:- To Enhance the Well-being of the Targeted Children Through Holistic Early Childhood Care and Development Support

Strategies:

- Ensure that supporting Environment (School, community

and home) is in place to promote holistic development of children.

- Ensure that all targeted children receive ECCD, **Gender**, education and skill training services.
- Decrease the rate of school dropouts by providing support services like initiating IGA for families, study programs, tutorial classes, strengthening transition schools, using community resources and facilities.
- Initiate & strengthen educational support programs for children with special needs & skills so that they will be able to pursue their education.
- Give due attention to children in especially difficult circumstances (children with disabilities, HIV/AIDS orphans, etc.) in future programs.

Goal 2:- To promote the comprehensive growth & developmental needs of disadvantaged children through holistic educational support.

Strategies:

- Promote Quality Basic Education for School aged disadvantaged children & paying due attention to girls.
- Facilitate child self learning.
- Promote students' individual and group talents.
- Develop teachers' capacity through active learning training.
- Create child friendly school environment.
- Capacitate school management team for effective school development.

2. Core Program-2

Skills & Entrepreneurship Development

The sub components of the Skills & Entrepreneurship Development Program are:

- Promotion of Skills Development
- Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship
- Promotion of IGAs

The specific objectives of the Skills & Entrepreneurship Development Program are :

- To develop & upgrade the entrepreneurship skills of youth groups.
- To improve access and affordability to livelihood earnings of the youth.
- To enhance the satisfaction of nutritional needs & dietary preferences of marginalized target groups.
- To diversify the resource base of youth groups.

Goal :- To Enhance Household Food Security of the Targeted Communities Through Promoting Sustainable Entrepreneurship Skill.

Strategies:

- Enhance access to marketable, Vocational and Management skills
- Entrepreneurship (Micro and Small scale Enterprise) Development/Promotion by engaging the youth
- Promote access to Micro Finance Services

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- Enhance market promotion
 - Promote value chain products and **market chain services**
 - Enhance the introduction & utilization of appropriate technologies that improve productivity
 - Enhance the capacities and working systems of cooperatives
 - Introduce and disseminate environmentally friendly livelihood improvement schemes
 - Promote project based IGAs
 - Empower community resilience towards area specific problems

3. Core Program

3.1 Gender & Life Skills Development

The sub components of the **Gender & Life Skills Development Program** are:

- Integrated Life Skill Education
- User Friendly Service Promotion
- Male Female Engagement Promotion
- HIV/AIDS & STD Prevention Education

The specific objectives of the **Gender & Life Skills Development Program** are:

- To enhance the knowledge, skill and attitude of adolescents & youth on HIV/AIDS, STDs, sexual and reproductive Gender issues
- To prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, support and give priority for the victims of HIV/AIDS both at program and organizational level
- To make all programs HIV/AIDS sensitive

- To enable adolescents & youth make evidence based and informed decisions with responsible choices regarding their sexual and reproductive Gender
- To empower local community and parents to initiate and bring a more sustainable change in positive behavior and practices of adolescents & youth towards sexual & reproductive Gender
- To capacitate **Gender** service providers in improving user friendly services
- To promote Gender engagement
- To empower women to claim their rights and fight against any form of gender based discrimination and mistreatment
- To encourage women to play active role in DEC programs and among the community
- To enforce the implementation of organizational gender policy at all levels

Goal 1:- To Promote Attention to and Understanding of HIV/AIDS & STDs Issues Within the Context of DEC Organizational Operation and Developmental Programs

Strategies:

- Facilitate and increase responses to HIV/AIDS in DEC programs and at internal organization level through collaborative action of different stakeholders, the staffs of the organization and target communities
- Disseminate information, share experience and knowledge,
- Extend psycho social and economical support for the needy/ victims of the epidemic

Goal 2:- To promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education in As-

uring the Sexual and Reproductive Gender Development of Target Communities.

Strategies:

- Mobilize and sensitize community on sexual and reproductive **Gender** using traditional forums and experiences.
- Use age appropriate and culture sensitive comprehensive sexuality Education procedures.
- Create an enabling environment in **Gender** services to attract youth.
- Partner with stakeholders with similar goals.

Goal 3:- To promote attention to and understanding of Gender issues within the context of DEC organizational & program operations

Strategies:

- Ensure gender equality in selecting program targets
- Promote gender equality in organizational decisions (employment, promotion, etc.
- Promote Gender Issues at all organizational and program level engagements

5. Risk & Assumptios

5.1. Risks

There are several risks related to the implementation of this Strategic Plan.s The following are the major risks identified for consideration:

- **Shortage of Fund:** Under the current international trend of diverting financial resource to major conflict areas and supporting refugees grant funding may reduce and the non-availability of the financial resource will affect the operating costs of the organization. There is no assurance that the entire planned budget will be secured.
- **Systems Development & Enforcement:** The absence of standard, well documented, internalized guidelines, work standards and compliance at all levels of the organization may hamper the successful implementations of the plan. There is a need for developing, ensuring internalization and enforcing the implementation of policy guidelines that designate responsibilities for assuring the success of this plan.
- **Effect of Devaluation:** The impact of devaluation of the Birr has mixed understanding among different donors. Some donors stick to the hard currency budget allocation which has a positive impact during devaluation while some consider the original converted Birr amount which has a negative impact on project implementation because of the resulting loss of budgeted amount.
- **Inconvenient Regulations & Directives:** The government might introduce inconvenient regulations and directives that hinder smooth implementation of the strategic plan.
- **Poor Communication:** The absence of an effective and agreed communication strategy in disseminating the plan may result in poor information flow and thereby delay decision-making. This will result in a risk of failure and/or delay in the implementation of the Plan.
- **Lack of Ownership:** The lack of ownership by the stakeholders, for instance project beneficiaries, may lead to failure in the implementation of the strategic plan. The best way of mitigation is to work with all partners to bring the risks to manageable scale of operation and resource requirement

through designing appropriate strategies with open and transparent consensus building, systems development and building internal capacity.

5.2. Assumptions

The following are the important assumptions underlying the successful implementation of the five-year strategic plan of DEC. These are:

- Government policies and procedures will remain favorable for CSOs/NGOs operating in the country.
- Concerned Regional, Zonal, Woreda and Kebele Administration sectoral offices will continue to collaborate with DEC in realizing its goals and objectives.
- Donors will continue to provide the necessary support for DEC towards the achievement of objectives set in the strategic plan.
- Critical/Strategic issues identified in developing the current SP are well taken care of.
- DEC's capacity in terms of appropriate human power (board, management and staff), structure and systems of operation, etc., will be built to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability during the plan period.
- Target beneficiaries will actively involve in problem identification, prioritization, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to ensure ownership and sustainability.